

W.J. Hughes Business House (C.J. Wilson Clothing Store)
3202 Ocoee Street
Cleveland
Bradley County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-204

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

W.J. HUGHES BUSINESS HOUSE
(C. J. Wilson Clothing Store)

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Location: 3202 Ocoee Street, Cleveland, Bradley County,
Tennessee.

Present Owner: C.J. Wilson Estate, under trusteeship of C.S. Mayfield,
Attorney, Cleveland, Tennessee.

Present Occupant: Law offices (as of 1983).

Significance: This building represents seventy years of Cleveland's
commercial growth, from 1840 to 1910. Its architecture is
representative of the many local embellishments of its
day, due mostly to the civic pride and leadership of J. H.
Craigmiles. It is also representative of many such
commercial buildings still found in country towns in this
and neighboring states. It has been the location of the
following Cleveland business establishments: W.H. Tibbs,
Tibbs and Surguine, Hughes and Tibbs, W.J. Hughes, (all
dry goods, hardware, and grocery stores), Kelly and Cooper
Saloon, and since 1909, C. J. and J. L. Wilson Dry Goods
(Clothing Store). It is listed on the National Register
of Historic Places.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Original building 1840-1850. Facade c. 1880
2. Architect: Unknown.

Although no architect or builder is known for either the original structure or the new facade the following craftsmen were working in Cleveland at the time. J.N. and M.M. Cowan, stone and brickmasons and W.T. Fisher, architect and builder, were listed in 1860. Joseph R. Taylor was a contractor and builder in Cleveland from 1853 to 1877. "The school house and a number of the best residences of Cleveland were built by him".* D.L. Bible, contractor and builder, came to Cleveland in 1869 and was still active in 1887. He built other buildings of same time period such as the Craigmiles' Block, McNelly Corner, the Jones's residence, and the Maury County Georgia Courthouse. Also, James Steed was the contractor for the 1853 Masonic Hall.

*No source was included with this quotation. A bibliography on page 6 includes some information which may lead to the identity of the source.

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3. Original and subsequent owners: The W.J. Hughes Business House is built on the southeast side of the northeast half of Lot # 12 in the city of Cleveland, County of Bradley, State of Tennessee. It fronts on Ocoee Street between Inman and South Streets 24 feet and runs back from Ocoee 105 feet to Lot # 30 with free pass way of 5 feet of this said Lot # 30. The following references to the title of this lot is found in the Bradley County, Tennessee Deed Books.

W.H. Tibbs to John and James Cowan, 7/30/1850, Bk. 1, p. 198-199. (the original entry for this transaction was destroyed along with most other county records in a fire that consumed Craigmiles' Store where they were stored on November 25, 1864. However reference to this transaction is made in the following deed).

"John and James Cowan to Hughes and Tibbs 4/17/1867, Bk. A, p. 441 house and lot for \$5000.00 being the house and lot now occupied by said parties of the second part which was by us purchased of William H. Tibbs by deed of date the 30th day of July 1850, and register's office said county of Bradley, on the date of deed in Book I, pp. 198-199." Recorded 11/13/1867.

William C. Tibbs to William J. Hughes (his 1/2 interest)
10/29/1868. (Bk. A P. 652-653) for \$3000.00
Recorded 10/29/1868.

Wm. J. Hughes and wife to John H. Craigmiles 12/7/1880
(Bk. G, p. 54-55) for \$2000.00. "the storehouse and lot known as the W. J. Hughes store house."
Recorded 12/7/1880.

J. H. Craigmiles and wife to F. P. Kelly and J. P. Cooper
6/25/1891 (Bk. M, p. 179) for \$2750.00., and note for
\$2750.00. Recorded 8/26/1891

F. P. Kelly and J. P. Cooper and wife to Gus Cate 8/18/1903. (Bk. V, p. 18-19) for \$3000.00 recorded 8/19/1903.

Gus Cate and wife to C.J. Wilson 11/1/1909 (Bk. 28, p. 372) for \$4000.000. "Together with all interest of the grantors in any sewage system and connections with said property." Registered 1/26/1910.

4. Builder, contractor, supplier: Although no account of suppliers for the building can be made the following craftsmen and suppliers were working in Cleveland in 1876: J.T. Douglas, tinsmith., H.N. Rogers, carpenter; W. Stevenson, painter; Williams and Smith, marble workers.

5. Original plans and construction: The side walls of the building, built of handmade brick and sand mortar, date to the construction of the original building, 1840-50.
6. Alterations and additions: At some point between the original construction and the 1850 sale the building was extended on the rear to occupy the entire lot. In the middle of the store between the older portion and addition the foundation for the chimney is extant. After the addition was made the chimney was removed leaving a hole in the ceiling and roof which were then enclosed by a skylight, extant.

The original slate sidewalks have been covered over by concrete but the step-up of the building is still pronounced.

After the remodeling and erection of a new facade c. 1880 there have been few alterations. The original electric wires are extant. Sewerage system was added about 1907. When C. J. Wilson obtained the building in 1909 he painted his name on the facade and added wall shelf fixtures for his dry goods. Since that time only the roof has been altered from the original gable (rafters extant) to the present slope.

- B. Historical Context: Following Tennessee's admission to the Union in 1796 the Ocoee District, the second cession of Cherokee territory (the first being the Hiwassee District to the north ceded 1819), was ratified in 1836. That same year Bradley County was organized and in 1838 the town of Cleveland was laid out and the first structures were erected- the majority frame, and the court and jailhouse log. In 1839 a new courthouse was built of brick probably the first of that material. By 1840 the town had a population of 500 and among its first merchants was William H. Tibbs. Tibbs was born in Virginia in 1816 and was a Master Mason. He was one of the first two new members of Cleveland's Masonic Lodge organized under dispensation in 1847.

Early merchandising was quite a pioneer undertaking. Some merchants and traders had previously worked for the Indians. Until the extension of the railroad of Cleveland connection with suppliers was very difficult. Goods were originally hauled by wagons from Nashville, Augusta and other distant points. The construction of the Western and Atlantic made possible the pick-up and delivery of goods in Cleveland. In 1851 the Hiwassee Railroad was completed.

William H. Tibbs sold the property in 1850 to J.N. and M. Cowan. The Cowan brothers were listed in 1860 as stone and brick masons and it is possible although not likely that they were responsible for having built the addition to the original structure. It is much more likely however that they were the masons for the erection of both the original structure and the rear addition.

Nevertheless Tibbs did not go out of business nor vacate the store. In 1860 Tibbs and Surguine Dry Goods Store was listed at the corner of Ocoee and South (actually the corner lot was vacant).

Mitchell's 1860 Gazetteer described Cleveland as "an active business place . . . with about twenty stores of various kinds. Its population numbered 2,000, but business activity slowed down with the beginning of war and not recover for several years. During the Civil War, Cleveland suffered severely. The county for miles around was laid waste, troops quartered in churches and public buildings, property was destroyed and business paralyzed." To add to the confusion Craigmiles' Store burned November 25, 1864 destroying most of the county records that were stored there.

After the war the Tibbs store passed back into Tibbs ownership with W.J. Hughes as partner. Tibbs must have died soon thereafter since William C. Tibbs* sold his one half interest to Hughes a year later.

By the early 1870s recovery had begun. The population of the community increased rapidly due to the establishment of some stable industries which attracted people from different parts of the country. Cleveland must have suffered a loss of population during the war years and immediately afterward for in 1876 the population was only 2,200. Yet the town took on a more stable and prosperous air. Among the town's many business were its seventeen general stores one of which on Ocoee Street was that of W.J. Hughes. It was in these more prosperous years that Hughes made a leading reputation for his business.

Prosperity continued through the 1880's. In 1887 Cleveland established a horse car line that came from the depot up Ocoee Street and points eastward. By that same year population had increased to 3000, but by 1890 population had suddenly boosted to 4000. The town supported seven physicians, eighteen groceries, two banks, three undertakers, among the other businesses. Among the town's five saloons was that of Kelly and Cooper. These two men had bought the Hughes Business House from Craigmiles in 1891, but had operated there earlier. For the first time the business house was used for something other than dry goods.

F. P. Kelly had been a leading saloonkeeper in Cleveland for some years. He was listed in an 1876 directory as a saloon proprietor.

He and J. P. Cooper worked as their own bartenders. The saloons were a collecting place for the townsmen although in later years they became rather decrepit. Rough language and violence were not

* Not to be confused with William H. Tibbs

uncommon. There were several killings in this and other saloons in town.

By the turn of the century drunks were a common sight on downtown streets. The second floor of Kelly and Cooper was mostly used as a place for drunks to sleep. Public opposition to saloons became so strong that a prohibition ordinance was passed in 1903, although not immediately nor strongly enforced. Public pressure continued, once a sign - "Black Tiger", the equivalent of the modern word "bootlegger", was hung on the door of the Kelly and Cooper Saloon which was selling liquor illegally. Finally public pressure resulted in the laws being enforced and the saloons being closed down. Actually only those in the center of town were forced out of business while many of those in the outlying areas were much less affected, and in reality the result of prohibition was to get the drunks off the city streets into the alleys and backroads where they were less noticeable. Kelly and Cooper soon sold out to Gus Cate, a land speculator. A few years later he sold it to C.J. Wilson.

Wilson came from Charleston, a small but old river port on the Hiwassee. He painted his sign on the facade, cleaned the store, built fixtures and stocked the store. Wilson died in 1945. Neither he nor his son after him made any noticeable alterations and much of the old stock remained on the shelves and tables until the recent death of J.L. Wilson when all the stock was sold, much of it for antiques. The C.J. Wilson Clothing Store one of the oldest continuing places of business in Cleveland and Bradley County.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This two-story, brick, party-walled rectangular (24' x 105' including extension) business house with three-bay front and shed roof (not original) was built, and a two-story extension added to the rear, 1840-1850. The red pressed brick, American bond facade (c.1880) has a one-story, cast-iron front one step-up from the sidewalk level containing a recessed, panelled, double door with large, single lights and similarly panelled bays on either side with large, plateglass, display windows. Two cast-iron columns at the inner corners of the bays support a decorative cast-iron architrave. The three second-story windows are double hung with one-over-one lights, and are framed by rusticated limestone sills and segmental arches. Connecting the sills is a continuous limestone stringcourse. Crowning the facade is a stamped tin cornice with single end brackets. Further decoration is provided in the corbelled brick work below the cornice, in the brick work below each of the second-story windows, and in the iron work covering the vents above them. The name of one of the last

proprietors, C. J. Wilson, is painted immediately above these vents. The first floor interior space is unobstructed by supports and the place where the original structure ended is marked by a chimney foundation and a second-story skylight.

Written by Joseph L. Herndon for National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form for C. J. Wilson Store, 1974.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Bradley County Deed Books.
(Place and address of repository not given).

b. Secondary and published sources:

Goodspeed's History of Tennessee, originally published 1887. Reprinted 1972 by Charles and Randy Eler Booksellers, Nashville.

Mitchell's Tennessee State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1860. McClung Collection, Lawson McGee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Polk and Company's Tennessee State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1876. McClung Collection, Lawson McGee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Polk and Company's Tennessee State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1890. McClung Collection, Lawson McGee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Cleveland Press, Cleveland Tennessee, 11/8/1973. "J. L. Wilson Among last of Pioneers."

B. Interviews:

James S. Hancock, Cleveland. Information on Kelly and Cooper Saloon

William R. Snell, Lee College, Cleveland. Historian, research assistance.

Prepared by:

(Historical section)

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HABS East Tennessee Project
Summer 1974

Edited by:

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Historic American Bldgs. Survey
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1974 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the East Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppliers, Chief of HABS, the paper (historical section) was written by Joseph L. Herndon, HABS Historian. Susan McCown, HABS staff historian in the Washington, D. C. office, reviewed the paper in 1986, for transmittal to the Library of Congress, and added the architectural information taken from the National Register of Historic Places form for this building. The photographs of the building were taken in February 1983 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer.